

FISHGUARD AND ROSSLARE RAILWAYS AND  
HARBOURS COMPANY.

(CORK AND FERMOY RAILWAY ABANDONMENT.)

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RETURN to an Order of the Honourable The House of Commons,  
*dated 26 July 1901;—for,*

COPY "of CORRESPONDENCE between the TREASURY and the FISHGUARD AND  
ROSSLARE RAILWAYS AND HARBOURS COMPANY in reference to the suggested  
abandonment of the direct Cork and Fermoy line."

Treasury Chambers,  
26 July 1901. }

AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

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(*Mr. Austen Chamberlain.*)

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*Ordered, by The House of Commons, to be Printed,*  
26 July 1901.

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COPY of CORRESPONDENCE between the TREASURY and the FISHGUARD AND ROSSLARE RAILWAYS AND HARBOURS COMPANY in reference to the suggested abandonment of the direct Cork and Fermoy line.

Great Western Railway, London Terminus,  
Paddington, W.,

DEAR MR. CHAMBERLAIN,

19th April, 1901.

I HAVE been asked by my colleagues on the Board of the Fishguard and Rosslare Railways and Harbours Company, the object of whose incorporation was the establishment of a first-class cross-channel service between the districts served by the systems of the Great Southern and Western Company in Ireland and the Great Western Company in England, through the ports of Fishguard and Rosslare, to bring under your notice the question of substituting for the already existing obligation to construct a railway from Fermoy to Cork, an obligation to construct a line connecting the systems of the Great Southern Company on the eastern side of the River Lee in Cork, with the lines of the Cork and Pandon and the Cork and Macroom Companies, to the western side of that river.

As the question is no doubt somewhat new to you, I have thought it well to send you a statement which will show the position of my company in connection with the matter; and I am desirous to ask that after an opportunity has been afforded you of considering the statement, you will, in conjunction with Mr. Wyndham, have the goodness to receive a deputation from my Board, when I hope that we shall be able to satisfy you that the substitution which we desire is one in the interests of the public and of the whole of the south of Ireland.

It would be a matter of convenience to myself, assuming it to be agreeable to Mr. Wyndham and yourself, if you could make an appointment for the afternoon of Wednesday, the 1st of May; and I would venture to ask you to give me as long notice as you conveniently can of the appointment, as I have no doubt some of my colleagues from Ireland will wish to be present.

Believe me, &c.,

J. Austen Chamberlain, Esq., M.P.

CAREFUL.

Fishguard and Rosslare Railways and Harbours,  
Secretary's Office,  
Paddington Station.

#### FISHGUARD AND ROSSLARE RAILWAYS AND HARBOURS UNDERTAKING.

##### STATEMENT.

The Fishguard and Rosslare Railways and Harbours Company (hereinafter called the Fishguard Company) is a separate company, but is in fact controlled by the Great Western Railway Company of England and the Great Southern Railway Company of Ireland, directors of these two companies, four nominated by the Great Western Company and three by the Great Southern Company, forming the board of the Fishguard Company, and the existing capital of that Company being held by the Great Western and Great Southern Companies, with power to subscribe in equal proportions the remainder of the authorised capital.

It is therefore desirable, before dealing with the powers and obligations of the Fishguard Company, to shortly describe the systems of the two companies and the manner in which they became connected in the cross-channel route between the south and west of Ireland and the south of England and Wales, *via* Fishguard and Rosslare.

The Great Western Company's railways extend from the Metropolis to Reading, Oxford, Leamington, Worcester, Hereford, Birmingham, Wolverhampton, and other important places in the north, and, in conjunction with the London and North Western Railway, to Shrewsbury, Chester, Birkenhead, and Manchester. They also extend to Bath, Bristol, Exeter, Plymouth, and Penzance; also to Dorchester, Weymouth, and, by means of the Didcot and Newbury Railway, which is worked, managed, and maintained by the Great Western Company to Winchester, their traffic passes over the London and South Western Railway to Southampton.

The Great Western Company's railway also extends to Swindon, Gloucester, Newport, Cardiff, Swansea, Carmarthen, and Milford Haven; also to Pontypool, Merthyr Tydfil, Aberdare, and various other towns, districts, and places in South Wales.

From New Milford the Great Western Railway Company run steamers of their own to Waterford, and other steamers in connection with the Great Western system, but not the property of the Company, run to Cork, so that at the present time there is a cross-channel service for traffic to and from the extensive area covered by the Great Western Company's railways and the south and west of Ireland.

The Great Western Company have endeavoured for many years past to establish, by means of their service of steamers between New Milford and Waterford, an effective and alternative route between the south and west of Ireland on the one hand and England and South Wales on the other, both for passenger and goods traffic. They have, with this object, assisted the Irish railway companies having their termini at Waterford both by subscriptions to their capital and rebates in the traffic carried by them.

In this endeavour they have signally failed, for the following amongst other reasons:—

The inferiority of the sea route via New Milford and Waterford as compared with the Holyhead and Kingstown route is perhaps one of the most important.

In the first place, the distance between New Milford and Waterford is 113 miles, against 65 miles between Holyhead and Kingstown; and further, constant delays and difficulties through fogs and other causes arise owing to the fact that many miles of river and estuary on both sides of the channel have to be traversed between Waterford and New Milford.

Another important element in the non-success of this route has been the inability of the comparatively weak Irish companies who, until recently, alone afforded a railway connection with the port of Waterford to effectively compete with the strong Irish companies serving the rival port of Dublin.

The Great Western Company had for many years had under their serious consideration the necessity of joining hands on the Irish side with some strong company, as the only means of developing a traffic which would justify them in continuing and improving their service of steamers.

The company in connection with which it was felt that this result might be most effectively brought about was the Great Southern Company.

The Great Western Company from time to time approached the Great Southern Company with the object of obtaining their co-operation and support in developing the Waterford and New Milford route, but, owing principally to the fact that the Great Southern Company had not direct access to the port of Waterford, they did not see their way until 1897 to enter into any arrangements with the Great Western Company for this purpose.

In 1897 negotiations were again opened, with the result that the Great Southern Company were induced to support the Great Western Company if they could purchase and acquire the undertakings of the Waterford, Dungarvan and Lismore, and Fermoy and Lismore Railway Companies, which would give them direct access to Waterford.

The Great Southern Company's system at that time extended from Dublin to Kilkenny, Cork, Queenstown, Killarney, Tralee, Limerick, Nenagh, and Athlone.

The Waterford, Dungarvan, and Lismore Railway was constructed partly by means of a loan of £3,000, obtained through the Irish Board of Works, and partly by means of baronial guarantees from the county of the City of Waterford and certain baronies of the county through whose district the railway ran. The interest on this loan fell into arrear, and in 1897 the Treasury contemplated taking possession of the line as mortgagors under their statutory powers with a view of selling the undertaking.

The Fermoy and Lismore Line was built and owned almost entirely by the Duke of Devonshire.

Negotiations were opened with the Treasury and His Grace by the Great Western and Great Southern Companies for the purchase of the undertakings of the Dungarvan and Fermoy Companies, and were successful, with the result that the Great Western and Great Southern Companies deposited a Bill in Parliament for the Session of 1898 empowering them to purchase and acquire these undertakings.

For the same session a Bill was also promoted by the Fishguard Company to enable them to acquire these undertakings, and also to construct a railway between Rosslare and Waterford, and a railway from Fermoy to Cork.

In the early part of the year 1898, however, owing to the difficulty which those interested in the Fishguard and Rosslare undertaking found in carrying out their schemes, they opened negotiations with the Great Western Company with the object of inducing them to take over the then existing undertakings of the Fishguard and Rosslare and North Pembrokehire and Fishguard Companies, and the proposals under the Bill of the Fishguard Company then before Parliament.

The Great Western Company had always recognised the superiority of the sea route *via* Fishguard (which was the original terminus of the South Wales Railway) and Rosslare over their existing New Milford and Waterford route, the distance between Fishguard and Rosslare being 59 miles, as compared with 111 miles, and without any difficulties of river navigation. They, however, felt they could not by themselves undertake the serious expense involved in carrying out the undertaking in its entirety, with the responsibility of constructing and working railways in Ireland.

They accordingly entered into negotiations with the Great Southern Company to co-operate with them in acquiring the undertakings both of the North Pembrokehire and Fishguard Companies, with the result that the interest of the parties holding the shares in the undertaking of the North Pembrokehire Company was acquired on behalf of the Great Western Company, and that in the undertaking of the Fishguard and Rosslare Company was acquired on behalf of the Great Western and Great Southern Companies, and an agreement was entered into in 1898 between these two latter companies, fully setting out the terms on which the said undertakings were to be carried out, but for technical reasons this agreement could not be scheduled to the Fishguard Act of 1898. This agreement is scheduled, however, to the Fishguard and Rosslare Railways and Harbours Act, 1899, a copy of which is sent herewith.

The result of these negotiations was that the Bill promoted by the Great Western and Great Southern Companies for the acquisition of the Waterford and Dungarvan and Fermoy and Lismore Railways was abandoned, and the Great Western and Great Southern Companies became, under the name of the Fishguard and Rosslare Company, the promoters of the Bill originally deposited by the latter Company, but dropping out of the scheme the promotion of the line from Fermoy to Cork.

The Great Western Company, in view of the heavy capital expenditure involved by this arrangement and their relations with the Great Southern Company, recognised that they could no longer continue the rebates they had formerly given to the comparatively weak Irish railways terminating at Waterford, and, seeing that without these rebates the companies owning those railways would be so seriously affected as to be unable to stand alone, it was arranged that the Great Southern Company should take over the undertakings of the Waterford, Limerick, and Western, and Waterford and Central Ireland Companies. These amalgamations received the sanction of Parliament in the year 1900.

In 1898, however, the interests involved in the transfer of the control of the Fishguard undertaking and the arrangements for the amalgamations referred to appeared to the Government of such importance to the south and west of Ireland that, with their concurrence, the Bill promoted by the Fishguard Company, the conduct of which had been taken over by the Great Western and Great Southern Companies, was referred to a Hybrid Committee of the House of Commons consisting of nine members, five being Irish Members or specially interested in the south of Ireland, viz. :—

Mr. Redmond, representing Waterford city ;  
Mr. Maurice Healy, representing Cork ;  
Mr. Sloc, representing Waterford county ;  
Mr. Smith Barry,  
Sir John Colomb,

and four other English Members, viz. :—

Sir Ughtred J. Kay-Suttleworth, Chairman,  
Sir William Arroll,  
Colonel Blundell, and  
Mr. Munts (this member did not, however, sit),

with a special instruction in the following terms :—

"That it be an instruction to the Committee that they do enquire and report whether the adoption of any or all of the proposals contained in the Bill would prevent or prejudice adequate competition in the railway system of the south of Ireland or in the system of communication between that country and England and Wales."

It should be here repeated that the Bill as submitted to the Hybrid Committee did not include the construction of a line between Cork and Fermoy.

While the scheme was in the hands of parties whose proposals and interests were hostile to and competitive with the Great Southern Company, it was clearly essential that their connection with the port of Cork should be independent of the Great Southern Company, and the construction of this railway was necessary, as otherwise their sole access to Cork as between Fermoy and Cork would have been over the Great Southern Railway. Seeing, however, that the Great Southern Company had become partners in the lines from Waterford to Fermoy, and that, under the arrangement with the Great Western Company, the Great Southern Company were to work the railways on the Irish side, the construction of the railway from Cork to Fermoy became wholly unnecessary; moreover the agreement between the Great Western and Great Southern Companies hereinbefore referred to expressly provides that the rates between Cork and Fermoy and all places beyond, both for local and through traffic, are in respect of traffic *via* Mallow to be calculated and charged upon the mileage distance as if the direct line between Cork and Fermoy had been constructed, and to secure the fulfilment of these facilities, running powers are given to the Fishguard Company over the railway of the Great Southern Company between Fermoy and Cork.

The Hybrid Committee sat to consider the Bill for fourteen days, during which they heard all parties interested, and went very fully into the whole of the circumstances, the result being that they passed the Bill.

In the course of the proceedings, however, various obligations were imposed upon the companies concerned in the interests of the public, involving a greatly increased expenditure beyond that contemplated by the Bill, and amongst other obligations were the following :—

- (a.) To promote a Bill for the construction, with the sanction of Parliament, of a line from Fermoy to Dunkettle (near Cork), with running powers over the Great Southern Company's line from Dunkettle to the Great Southern Company's terminal station at Cork.

(The Company, in fulfilment of these obligations, accordingly in the session of 1899 applied for and obtained powers to construct the line from Dunkettle to Fermoy, but they considered then, as

they considered at first, that the construction of such a line would be simply a waste of capital without any useful purpose being served.)

- (b) The Company to use their best endeavours to obtain the assent and co-operation of the Cork Harbour Commissioners and the Corporation of Cork, and of the Cork and Bandon and Cork and Macroom Railway Companies, and, within a reasonable time of obtaining such assent and co-operation, to apply for Parliamentary powers to construct, and on obtaining such powers to construct a line to connect the systems of the Companies west of Cork with the systems of the Fishguard Company and the Great Southern Company.
- (c) Provisions as to the construction of the railways and works of the Company at Waterford so as to be consistent with the construction of the authorised railways and works of the Dublin, Wicklow, and Wexford Company.  
(This had reference to the crossing of the River Suir at Waterford, and has been provided for.)
- (d) The relief to the extent of one-half of the heronial guarantee provided by the Waterford, Dungarvan, and Lismore Act, 1873.
- (e) The most stringent reciprocal traffic facilities between the railways of the Fishguard Company and the railways of all companies forming junctions with the railways of the Fishguard Company.
- (f) The fullest system of through booking between the railways of the Great Western Company and the systems of the Fishguard Company and the Great Southern Company by the short sea route, *via* Fishguard and Rosslare, with an effective service of trains on both the English and Irish sides, and a fast service of steamers across the Channel.
- (g) The provision by the Great Western Company, unless and until Parliament should otherwise determine, of an effective steamboat service between Waterford and Milford or Fishguard.
- (h) The maintenance and development of the traffic upon the lines of the Fishguard Company to the satisfaction of the Treasury.
- (i) In view of the proposed amalgamations of the Waterford and Central Ireland and Waterford and Limerick Companies respectively with the Great Southern Company, the maintenance of the *status quo* of both such first-mentioned companies pending the application for such respective amalgamations.
- (j) And lastly, the reconstruction of the Board of the Fishguard Company, which is in future to consist of four directors of the Great Western Company and three directors of the Great Southern Company.

In consideration of the obligations undertaken by the Fishguard Company and the two Companies, and the benefit the scheme would undoubtedly be to the south and west of Ireland, the Treasury, at the instance of the Committee, were approached with a view of inducing them to forego the payment by the Fishguard Company of the moneys advanced by them for the construction of the Waterford, Dungarvan, and Lismore Railway, which that Company was unable to repay.

This the Treasury agreed to do on certain conditions, and in the manner set forth in an agreement between them and the Fishguard Company, and which is scheduled to the Fishguard Act, 1898.

It will be seen therefrom that the Fishguard Company are to pay to the Treasury out of the first moneys raised by them the sum so advanced, and the Treasury agree to return the same to the Fishguard Company, £50,000, on being satisfied that half the works on each of the sections of the scheme between Rosslare and Waterford and Fermoy and Dunkettle (Cork) respectively, have been completed, and the balance when the whole of these works have been completed.

The Special Report from the Committee to the House also states, in referring to this matter (paragraph 21) as follows :—

"21. Lastly, in making a concession as to the sum of 93,000*l.* on loan from the Government in respect of the Waterford, Dungarvan, and Lismore line (one of the undertakings absorbed by the Fishguard Company), the Treasury have stipulated, not only that all the conditions imposed by your Committee on the promoters should be accepted, but that the following clause should be inserted in the Bill :—

"If the Treasury shall be of opinion that the three Companies (viz. the Great Western Railway Company, the Great Southern and Western Railway Company, and the Fishguard Company) are not properly working, maintaining, and developing the traffic on or over the railways of the Company, or that the through or local rates or fares charged upon those railways are unreasonable, they may call upon the three Companies to make such alterations in their mode of working, maintaining, and developing traffic, or in the rates or fares charged, as they may think fit, and should the three Companies fail to make such alterations within a reasonable time after notice to them to that effect, the Treasury may prefer a complaint against the three Companies to the Railway Commissioners for an order directing such alterations to be made, and thereupon the Railway Commissioners may make such order on the complaint as to them may seem fit."

It will therefore be seen that amongst the obligations undertaken by the Fishguard Company is the construction of a line between Cork and Fermoy, and the use of their best endeavours to obtain the assent and co-operation of the local authorities in Cork and the railway companies west of Cork in the construction of a line to connect the systems of the companies west of Cork with the systems of the Fishguard Company and the Great Southern Company.

It should be stated that the 93,000*l.* has not yet been repaid, the Board of Works in Ireland, with the assent of the Treasury, having agreed to extend the time for payment on the Company agreeing to an increased rate of interest.

As before stated, the Bill of 1898, as originally submitted to the Hybrid Committee, did not propose the construction of a line between Cork and Fermoy, but during the proceedings pressure was brought to bear on the two Companies by Mr. Maurice Healy, the then member for Cork, and some others, who at that time were of opinion that a direct service to Cork via the proposed line would be of great importance to the city.

Although the two companies felt that the construction of the Cork and Fermoy Line was a waste of capital, they reluctantly accepted the obligation, and, as before stated, this line is a portion of the works which are to be constructed before the Treasury return the 93,000*l.* to the two companies.

Since the passing of the Act of 1898 the Fishguard Company, towards carrying out the scheme thereby authorized, have acquired the undertakings of the Waterford, Dungarvan, and Lismore and Lismore and Fermoy Railways, providing therefor respectively 218,500*l.* and 80,000*l.*, and the Great Southern Company are now working these lines on behalf of the Fishguard Company.

The line between Waterford and Rosslare, powers to slightly deviate which where it crossed the River Barrow had to be obtained in the Session of 1899, has been laid out, and the contract for the construction of it let, and already on the works a sum of 15,752*l.* has been expended, and the contract time for the completion of the line expires on the 30th June 1903.

The works at Fishguard and Rosslare Harbours, upon which a sum of 550,000*l.* is to be expended, are proceeding rapidly.

The North Pembroke Line, at the time the Great Western Company took it over, had only been completed as far as Letterston, the portion between Letterston and Goodwick being only partly constructed. This line, which under the arrangements was taken over by the Great Western Company, has been completed by them and opened for traffic since.



The Great Western Company have voted capital for the construction of two steamers, which will be available for the service between Fishguard and Rosslare, and they will be ready before the line between Waterford and Wexford has been completed, and the harbour works at Rosslare and Fishguard are constructed.

It will thus be seen that the through route between the south and west of Ireland and England and Wales *viâ* Fishguard and Rosslare is in a fair way to being completed at an early date.

This, of course, does not include the direct line from Fermoy to Cork. The two companies, in the light of their experience and the information they have obtained since the passing of the Act of 1898, are more than ever convinced that the construction of this line is not only a useless expenditure of money, but that it is not required in the interests of the through service between Cork and England *viâ* Rosslare and Fishguard, of the traffic of the district, or of the trade of the port of Cork.

Such a line, if constructed, upon the new through cross-channel service to Cork coming into operation, might shorten the actual distance by a few miles; but it would tend, by dividing the traffic and duplicating the service to be provided, to prevent the best possible service being afforded between Cork and Rosslare, while it would tend to diminish the efficiency of the service by the new route to the important district in the west of Ireland which is now served through Mallow.

As before pointed out, Mallow is the junction of all lines on the Great Southern system, serving places in the south and south-west of Ireland, and it is obvious that a very large proportion of the passengers using the new through route would be destined for the Lake District of Killarney and other tourists' resorts which are served by the Great Southern Railway. If, therefore, the through service to Cork by the Fishguard route is *viâ* Mallow, Cork passengers would be in no way inconvenienced, the time occupied in the journey would at the most be only some few minutes more than if a line was constructed from Fermoy to Cork, and the whole of the other passengers would be able to reach their destination *viâ* Mallow with the greatest convenience.

Moreover, the fear which the Committee of 1898 had, and which induced them to ask for a pledge that the Cork and Fermoy line should be constructed (*viz.*, that the Great Southern Company would not properly work the traffic *viâ* Mallow) has not been justified. On the contrary, since the taking over of the Waterford and Lismore lines, the Great Southern Company have done their utmost to develop the traffic on these lines, and have put on a greatly improved service of local and through trains between Cork and Waterford, as will be shown by the comparative table following, *viz.* :—(See Appendix.)

And obviously, even this greatly improved service will be still farther developed and improved when the regular through service is in force, provided the companies are able to devote all their energies to the development of the service *viâ* Mallow.

In compliance with the pledge in respect of the line to connect the Great Southern system with the railways south of the River Lee at Cork, the Fishguard Company have approached the Cork authorities, and have prepared and submitted to them a scheme which, in their judgment, would best effect the object desired, and the matter is now under consideration by the local authorities.

It is quite obvious, however, that if the Fishguard Company are forced to expend the large sum necessary for the construction of the Cork and Fermoy line, they could not agree to contribute to any substantial extent to the cost of constructing the Cork connecting line, and the main portion of the money necessary for the purpose would have to be found by the Cork authorities.

So strongly, however, do the two companies feel that the Cork and Fermoy line is unnecessary, and, if constructed, would not only not improve the through route, but would for the reasons before stated render it less effective, that they would be willing, with the concurrence of, but without

asking assistance from, the Cork authorities, if they were released from their obligation and arrangement with the Treasury for the construction of the Cork and Fermoy line, to themselves find the money for and construct the connecting line at Cork, which they are confident would best serve the interests of the south of Ireland.

April, 1901.

# APPENDIX.

## TIME TABLE.

### WATERFORD, DUNGARVAN, AND LISMORE SERVICE, 1898.

#### TO WATERFORD.

	A.M.	A.M.	P.M.	
Kingsbridge - - - dep.	—	9 15	2 45	
Mallow - - - - - arr.	—	1 25	7 17	
Cork - - - - - dep.	7 30	12 35	6 45	
Mallow - - - - - arr.	8 25	1 15	7 35	
Killarney - - - - - dep.	—	11 26	4 12	
Mallow - - - - - arr.	—	1 1	5 48	
Mallow - - - - - dep.	8 11	1 45	7 40	
Lismore - - - - - arr.	10 22	5 0	8 55	
Dungarvan - - - - - "	12 15	5 40	9 27	
Waterford - - - - - "	2 30	5 5	10 55	} Saturdays only.

#### FROM WATERFORD.

	A.M.	A.M.	P.M.	
Waterford - - - - - dep.	—	9 40	3 45	
Dungarvan - - - - - "	—	11 0	5 5	
Lismore - - - - - "	7 5	11 40	5 48	
Mallow - - - - - arr.	8 27	1 5	7 25	
Mallow - - - - - dep.	8 45	1 40	7 45	
Killarney - - - - - arr.	10 20	3 15	9 22	
Mallow - - - - - dep.	8 25	1 35	7 28	
Cork - - - - - arr.	9 25	2 15	8 10	
Mallow - - - - - dep.	10 40	1 23	10 59	
Kingsbridge - - - - - arr.	4 40	5 40	4 10	

## TIME TABLE.

### GREAT SOUTHERN AND WESTERN SERVICE. SUMMER 1901.

#### TO WATERFORD.

	A.M.	A.M.	P.M.	P.M.	
Kingsbridge - - - - - dep.	—	10 0	—	4 0	—
Mallow - - - - - arr.	—	1 15	—	7 21	—
Cork - - - - - dep.	7 30	12 30	5 10	6 40	—
Mallow - - - - - arr.	8 8	1 15	5 57	7 30	—
Killarney - - - - - dep.	7 0	11 26	4 45	—	—
Mallow - - - - - arr.	8 0	1 1	5 47	—	—
Mallow - - - - - dep.	8 50	1 45	6 5	7 40	—
Lismore - - - - - arr.	10 16	2 57	7 9	8 50	—
Dungarvan - - - - - "	10 48	3 29	7 40	—	—
Waterford - - - - - "	11 55	4 45	8 47	—	—

## FROM WATERFORD.

	A.M.	A.M.	A.M.	P.M.	P.M.
Waterford - - - dep.	—	8 30	10 10	4 20	6 25
Dunguena - - - "	—	9 20	11 21	5 20	7 50
Lisnara - - - "	7 15	9 48	11 55	6 3	8 55
Mallow - - - arr.	8 27	10 38	1 10	7 18	10 24
Mallow - - - dep.	8 45	10 40	1 40	7 34	—
Kilbarney - - - arr.	10 20	11 58	3 15	8 34	—
Mallow - - - dep.	8 36	10 53	1 15	7 28	10 45
Cork - - - arr.	9 23	11 37	2 0	8 10	11 25
Mallow - - - dep.	—	10 40	1 17	—	10 59
Kingsbridge - - - arr.	—	4 40	5 45	—	A.M. 4 10

Treasury Chambers, Whitehall, S.W.,

3rd May 1901.

DEAR LORD CAWDOX,

You will have gathered from the proceedings at last Wednesday's deputation that the decision regarding the substitution of the Cork bridge for the Cork to Fermoy line is one which must come from the Irish Office rather than the Treasury. But there is one point connected with it, requiring early consideration, which I desire to bring to your notice.

You will remember that the date of commencement of the Cork to Fermoy line was a point in which the Irish members took a great interest during last session, and that they put several questions on the subject to my predecessor. No mention had been made at that time of any substitute for the scheme, such as you now propose; and Mr. Hanbury felt himself bound to press for an undertaking from the Fishguard and Rosslare Company, and to threaten that, unless such an undertaking were given, the Treasury would use the only weapon which they possessed against the company, and ask for payment of the sum of 93,000*l.*, which was outstanding at the very low rate of interest of 2½ per cent.

After some correspondence, Mr. Whitelaw, writing for your directors on 31st July 1900, stated "I am authorised on their behalf to say that that portion of their line"—i.e., the line from Fermoy to Cork—"shall be commenced within a twelve-month from this date"—that is, by 31st July 1901, and on the 4th of August he further promised that the commencement should be a *bona fide* one.

A clause ratifying this promise was included in a draft agreement about the debt of 93,000*l.* (the interest on which has now been raised to 3½ per cent.), which was sent to your company by the Board of Works for completion some time ago, but which has not yet been returned.

All that I wish to do at present is to call your attention to the facts that I have set out above, and to ask you, if you desire to be released from your promise, to submit your proposals in good time in order that I may consider them fully with the Chief Secretary.

Yours, &amp;c.,

AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

Fishguard and Rosslare Railways and Harbours,  
Secretary's Office,  
Paddington Station,

London, W.,

DEAR MR. CHAMBERLAIN,

28th May 1901.

I must apologise for the delay in replying to your letter of the 3rd instant, which has been caused by pressure of Parliamentary business, and by the necessity for communicating with my colleagues in Ireland.

I have desired that the draft agreement referred to in your letter may be returned to the solicitor of the Board of Works in Ireland, but I have

ventured, in view of our recent interview, to give instructions that the provision to which you refer as to the construction of the Fermoy and Dunkettle line should be struck out.

I propose to have sent you, however, in the course of a few days, a further draft agreement, dealing with the substitution of the connecting line through Cork for the Fermoy and Dunkettle line, in a form which I hope will be satisfactory to the Chief Secretary and yourself.

If you should desire to see myself or any of our officers on the subject of the new draft agreement, I have no doubt you will kindly let me know.

I should add that the secretary informs me that the interest on the £3,000, at the increased rate of 3½ per cent. was duly paid for the past half-year.

Austen Chamberlain, Esq., M.P.,  
Treasury, S.W.

Believe me, &c.,  
CANDOR.

Fishguard and Rosslare Railways and Harbours,  
Secretary's Office,  
Paddington Station,  
London, W.,

DEAR MR. CHAMBERLAIN,

13th June 1901.

WITH reference to my letter to you of the 28th ultimo, I have now the pleasure to send you the further draft agreement which I then referred to dealing with the substitution of the connecting line through Cork for the Fermoy and Dunkettle line, which I hope will meet with the approval of the Chief Secretary and yourself.

Austen Chamberlain, Esq., M.P.,  
The Treasury, S.W.

Believe me, &c.,  
CANDOR.

AN AGREEMENT made and entered into this                      day                      1901, between the TREASURY with the consent of the CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND, signified by his signature hereto, of the one part, and the FISHGUARD AND ROSSLARE RAILWAYS AND HARBOURS COMPANY (hereinafter called "The Fishguard Company") of the other part, supplemental to an Agreement dated the 21st day of July 1898 scheduled to and confirmed by the Fishguard and Rosslare Railways and Harbours Act, 1898, hereinafter called the Principal Agreement.

WHEREAS by the Principal Agreement, it is recited that in the course of the passage of the Bill for the said Act through Parliament, certain obligations were undertaken by the Fishguard Company in the interest of the public, involving a greatly increased expenditure beyond that contemplated by the Bill, such obligations involving amongst others the following:—

The construction, with the sanction of Parliament, of a line from Fermoy to Dunkettle, with running powers over the Great Southern and Western Railway Company's line from Dunkettle to the Great Southern and Western Railway Company's terminal station at Cork.

The construction, with the sanction of Parliament and the co-operation of the local authorities in Cork and the railway companies west of Cork, of a line to connect the systems of the companies west of Cork with the systems of the Fishguard Company and the Great Southern and Western Railway Company.

And whereas the Fishguard Company have used their best endeavours to obtain the assent and co-operation of the local authorities in Cork and the railway companies west of Cork in the construction of the said connecting line, but such authorities have not only not expressed their assent, but have also intimated that they are under no obligation or undertaking to co-operate in such construction:

And whereas the Fishguard Company have recently approached the Treasury and the Chief Secretary for Ireland, pointing out to them respectively that the very substantial benefits to the whole of the south and south-west of Ireland intended to be secured by the scheme of the Fishguard Company as recognised by the Principal Agreement will be more materially advanced by the construction of the line to connect the systems of the companies west of Cork with the systems of the Fishguard Company and the Great Southern and Western Company than by the construction of the line from Fermoy to Dunkettle, with running powers over the Great Southern and Western Company's line from Dunkettle to Cork :

And whereas under section 74 of the said Act the Fishguard Company already possess running powers over the Great Southern and Western line from Fermoy to Cork, including the terminal station of that Company at Cork :

And whereas under the Fishguard Act, 1899, the Fishguard Company was authorised to construct a line from Fermoy to Dunkettle :

And whereas the Fishguard Company are under obligation to the Treasury to commence the works of the Fermoy and Dunkettle section of that line on or before the 31st day of July next :

And whereas the Fishguard Company, in view of the material advantages which would accrue to the public from their scheme if the connecting line through Cork were constructed, are willing, with the consent of the Treasury and the Chief Secretary, to seek powers from Parliament for the abandonment of the authorised line from Fermoy to Dunkettle and for the construction of the connecting line over the River Lee at Cork without requiring the co-operation of or any assistance from the Cork authorities or the railway companies west of Cork :

And whereas the Fishguard Company have approached the Cork authorities with a view to obtaining their concurrence in the proposal to abandon the construction of the Fermoy and Dunkettle line on their undertaking in lieu thereof to construct the connecting line over the River Lee in Cork without requiring any assistance from the Cork authorities in such construction, but no definite answer has yet been obtained from them :

And whereas the Chief Secretary and the Treasury are not indisposed, subject to the approval of Parliament, to acquiesce in the suggestions of the Fishguard Company :—

Now it is hereby agreed by and between the parties hereto as follows, viz. :—

1. The Fishguard Company are, until the 31st day of December 1902, relieved of any obligation in respect of the construction of the line from Fermoy to Dunkettle under their undertaking to the Treasury.

2. The Fishguard Company shall be at liberty, and hereby undertake, in the session of Parliament to be holden in the year 1902, to promote a Bill for the abandonment of their authorised line from Fermoy to Dunkettle, and the running powers over the line of the Great Southern Company from Dunkettle to Cork.

3. In the same session, by the same Bill (or by separate Bill if so advised), the Fishguard Company will seek powers from Parliament for the construction of a line affording a direct communication across the River Lee at Cork so as to connect the systems of the Company and of the Great Southern Company with those of the Cork, Bandon, and South Coast and the Cork and Macroom Railway Companies, and will forthwith, after such powers are obtained, proceed with the construction of such communication, which, when constructed, shall be part of the undertaking of the Fishguard Company. Provided always that the powers to abandon the construction of the Fermoy and Dunkettle line and the running powers over the Great Southern line from Dunkettle to Cork are first, or in the same session, obtained.

4. The powers for the construction of the communication mentioned in the last article shall be exercised at the expense of the Fishguard Company notwithstanding that no contribution may be obtained from the Cork authorities or the railway companies west of Cork.

5. In the event of the powers for the construction of the communication through Cork being obtained under the circumstances hereinbefore stated the Fishguard Company are hereby absolutely released from all further obligation to the Treasury in regard to the construction of the line from Fermoy to Dunkettle.

6. That in the event of the powers for the construction of the communication through Cork being obtained, the Treasury will, upon being satisfied that half of the works upon each of the sections of the scheme, viz., between Rosslare and Waterford and of the said communication have been constructed, they shall advance and pay to the Fishguard Company the sum of 50,000*l.*, and upon the certificate of the Inspecting Officer of the Board of Trade that the whole of the said works have been completed, the Treasury shall advance and pay to the Fishguard Company the sum of 43,000*l.*

7. That if the powers to be sought for in the Session of 1902 shall not be obtained, or if the Fishguard Company make default in the fulfilment of any of the obligations undertaken by them under this Agreement, nothing contained in this Agreement shall prejudice or affect the rights or obligations of the parties to the Principal Agreement.

10256/01.

Mr LORD,

Treasury Chambers,

29th June 1901.

I HAVE the honour, by direction of the Lord Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury, to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 13th instant and enclosure from the Fishguard and Rosslare Railways and Harbours Company, and I am to inform you that the proposals in those papers are receiving the careful consideration of His Majesty's Government.

I am, &c.,

AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

The Earl of Cawdor,  
Paddington Station, W.

11869/01.

Mr LORD,

Treasury Chambers,

26th July 1901.

IN continuation of my letter (10256) of the 29th ultimo, and with further reference to your Lordship's letters of the 28th May and 13th June, I am directed by the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury to inform you that after giving careful consideration to the proposals therein contained and to the circumstances under which the Fishguard and Rosslare Railways and Harbours Company came under an obligation to construct the Cork and Fermoy line, His Majesty's Government, without expressing their opinion on the relative merits of the two proposals before them, feel that they are precluded from entertaining any proposals which contemplate the ultimate abandonment of that line.

My Lords will therefore be obliged to adhere to their decision, as already communicated to you, to insist upon the immediate repayment of the outstanding debt of 93,000*l.* due to them by the Company at the close of the present month unless a *bond fide* start has been made with the work by that time; and my Lords cannot ask Parliament to vote a grant of 93,000*l.* to the Company except upon the conditions stated in the agreement scheduled to the Act of 1898.

I am, &c.,

AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

The Earl of Cawdor.



PIREGLAND AND ROSSLAKE RAILWAYS  
AND HARBOUR COMPANY.  
(COKE AND FURNACE RAILWAY ARRANGEMENT.)

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COPY of Correspondence between the Yorkshire  
and the Pireglard and Rosslake Railways  
and Harbours Company in reference to the  
suggested abandonment of the direct Gt. and  
Tennyson line.

(*Mrs. Abner Chamberlain.*)

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Ordered, by The House of Commons, to be Printed,  
26 July 1901.

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[Price 2d.]